

**AUGUSTA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY
JOINT TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
AND CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
ROOM 803, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, AUGUSTA, GEORGIA
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2011, 10:00 A.M.**

THOSE PRESENT:

Augusta-Richmond Co. Planning Commission

Paul DeCamp
Juriah Lewis
Marya Moultrie
Lynn Russell

City of Augusta

Heyward Johnson

Aiken County

Gerald Jefferson

CAC

Les Morton, Vice-Chairman

Columbia County

Glen Bollinger

GA DOT

Cissy McNure
Vonda Everett
Reuben Woods

City of North Augusta

Skip Grkovic

City of Aiken

Sandra Korbelik

SC DOT

Kevin Gantt
Mike Sullivan
Kenny Larimore
Bradley Reynolds

LSCOG

Lynnda Bassham

FHWA

Cornelius Davis

CSRA Regional Commission

Shontrill Baskin

Other

Harry Rice, Atkins
Wendy Dyson, Atkins

NOTE: *These minutes were transcribed from notes only. The tape of the meeting was accidentally used in another meeting.*

1. Election of Officers - CAC

This item was postponed until the next meeting due to absence of CAC members.

2. Consider approval of the minutes of the joint Technical Coordinating Committee and Citizens Advisory Committee meeting held on November 10, 2010.

Mrs. Korbelik requested the following correction to item #5 be made to the minutes. "Mrs. Korbelik stated the Selection Committee had wondered whether consultant approval required a motion from ARTS or if this information was advisory. If a motion was required, then shouldn't a ranking of consultants be voted on as it is not certain that negotiations with the primary

consultant would be successful. She thought this information would be advisory only and there should not be a vote.”

Ms. Moultrie also corrected item 9(b) “A CSRA Air Quality Alliance Stakeholders meeting will be held at the SCE&G Misty Lake recreational facility on March 18th from.....”

CAC – Mr. Morton moved and seconded the approval of the minutes of March 3, 2011 with corrections as outlined above. The motion was approved unanimously.

TCC - Mrs. Korbelik moved to approve the minutes of March 3, 2011 with corrections as outlined above. Mr. Woods seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Presentation on 14th Amendment Highway Corridor Study - Ms. Wendy Dyson and Mr. Harry Rice with Atkins.

Mr. DeCamp introduced Ms. Dyson and Mr. Rice with Atkins. Ms. Dyson and Mr. Rice made a PowerPoint presentation concerning the study, as outlined below, and answered questions from those in attendance.

The 14th Amendment Highway Corridor Study was mandated by Section 1927 of SAFETEA-LU to commission studies and reports regarding construction of a route linking Augusta, Macon, and Columbus, Georgia; Montgomery Alabama and Natchez Mississippi. A companion study will examine the 3rd Infantry Division Highway from Savannah and Augusta, GA to Knoxville, Tennessee. The project website for these projects is www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/section_1927.

This study will not:

- lead to the construction of any specific highway improvement;
- commit the States or MPOs to further analysis;
- result in a recommendation for a particular design or alignment unless FHWA specifically asks for it, as directed by Congress.

The Scope of Work is being completed in eleven tasks broken down in the three phases. Phase I was the prep work which ran from July through September 2010. This phase included a kickoff meeting with the contractor; an inventory of the study area documents and databases; organization and convening of the Expert Working Group (EWG) which is comprised of Federal, state and local transportation and land management agencies and will meet four times during the course of the study. Also during this phase the content for the FHWA website was developed, control points identified and recommendations for public involvement were developed.

Currently underway, Phase II is the engineering portion of the study. Public outreach will be conducted, alternative alignments and design levels will be identified; detailed spatial database will be compiled and a draft cost estimates and the steps to complete the study will be prepared.

The final report and optional planning studies will be completed in Phase III. The draft final report is due May 14th and recommendations for sub-studies are due June 18th. The optional sub-studies would cover economic impacts; environmental impacts; travel time and demand; safety; benefit / cost and additional public outreach.

The control points are Natchez, MS, Montgomery, AL, and Columbus, Macon and Augusta, GA. Nine MPOs and eighteen regional planning districts are located across the study area. The statute specifies that at least four alignments and or design levels will be identified for the 14th Amendment Highway. An alternative may include an alignment with a design level that changes (is an Interstate highway for a portion and an arterial for another portion). Among the design levels identified, at least one must be to Interstate standards, and at least one design level shall use substantial portions of existing highways.

The Interstate standard would utilize existing Interstates 55, 59, 20, 85, 16 and the proposed I-85 extension and the Montgomery Outer Loop. Upgrades will be made to non-Interstate segments to Interstate standards such as grade separations, full access control and shoulders and medians based on state design standards.

The Highway standard will utilize Interstates and US and State routes; minimum 4-lane divided roadways with partial access control; grade separated intersections (where practicable); variable width median; consolidation of driveways and shoulders and medians based on state design standards.

The Arterial standard will utilize existing US and State routes; minimum 4-lane divided roadway with no access control; at grade intersections; variable width median which may consist of a center two-way left turn lane; and shoulders and medians based on state design standards.

Five alternative routes and cost estimates (in millions of dollars) have been identified:

1. all Interstate - \$6,613 - \$7,658;
2. Maximum use of existing roadways - \$271 - \$314;
3. Highway utilizing US 84 to I-59 at Laurel - \$1,377 - \$1,594;
4. Highway utilizing US 84 to I-65 at Evergreen - \$2,974 - \$3,444
5. Highway utilizing US 84 to I-65 at Greenville - \$3,297 - \$3,818

Totals for Alternatives 4 and 5 include Alternative 3 costs for the project segments from Montgomery to Augusta.

Alternative 3 has four variations (in millions of dollars):

3. Highway baseline - \$1,377 - \$1,594
- 3a. Laurel Bypass - \$1,436 - \$1,662
- 3b. US 80 - Tuskegee to Phenix City - \$1,884 - \$2,181
- 3c. Macon - Sgoda Road Bypass - \$1,811 - \$2,097

The next steps will be to finalize cost estimates and steps to complete, based on feedback from the EWG and public outreach; complete the planned public outreach activities; and prepare the draft Final Report and recommendations for the sub-studies. This power point presentation is available online at www.augustaga.gov/index.aspx?NID=896.

4. Update the Georgia Transportation Act of 2010.

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. Last year the Georgia General Assembly passed a bill that gives regions an opportunity to offer, by referendum to the voters, to add an additional penny to the sales tax to fund transportation projects. If a list of projects is approved by the CSRA Regional Transportation Roundtable, it will be presented to voters in August 2012. The bill calls for local governments and MPOs throughout the state to submit by March 30 an unconstrained list of projects to GA DOT Director of Planning and the Executive Committee of the respective Roundtables, which in Augusta is the CSRA Transportation Roundtable. This list has been submitted and includes the projects in the current TIP and many of the projects in the Long Range Transportation Plan. In addition, there were projects submitted directly by local governments in our region, as well as the airports and transit agencies. There is \$3.6 billion worth of roads, bridges and air projects on the unconstrained list submitted to the CSRA Regional Transportation Roundtable, which is five times the amount of funds estimated to be generated by the tax over the next 10 years. The GA DOT Director of Planning in conjunction with the Executive Committee of the CSRA Roundtable will take the unconstrained list and develop a constrained list that must be approved by the full Roundtable of the 13 county CSRA by October 15, 2011. This final list will be put before the voters next year for approval.

5. Status of Projects:

(a) Georgia Highways

Mrs. Everett presented the status of highway projects for Georgia.

- SR 56 from Bennock Mill Road to Old Waynesboro Road - layouts have been made available to the public and are available to the public in the Augusta Engineering Department Office, the Food Lion Grocery store on Highway 56 and the District Office on Frontage Road. Comments will be received until March 14th. ROW is scheduled for 2011, 2012 and 2013. A 24' raised median is planned as part of the project.

Status of projects not under construction:

- A Field Plan review is scheduled for Bobby Jones Expressway (PI 210700-) on April 13, 2011.
- Windsor Spring Road (Phase IV) – ROW was authorized in June 2010; however, ROW plan corrections are underway. Acquisition probably won't begin until mid-May.
- Wrightsboro Road – ROW is underway. Approximately 90% of the parcels have been acquired.

(b) South Carolina Highways

Mr. Reynolds presented the status of South Carolina highway projects.

- Silver Bluff / SC 302- corridor improvements - a public meeting is scheduled on May 26 to look at a shift in the alignment of this project.
- SC 19 - drainage project - the City of Aiken's consultant is working on plan design changes
- SC 125 / East Buena Vista and Atomic Road have been combined into one project. The scope of work changed from a widening project to a corridor improvement project. A

traffic analysis was done to determine the best project for the corridor. ROW is scheduled for summer 201.

- US 25 / Walnut Lane - SCDOT has finished all reviews and is waiting to receive R/W plans from Florence and Hutchinson.
- North Augusta Park and Ride - URS has been selected to be the consultant for the project. Scoping meeting will be scheduled shortly to prepare to negotiate for the project..
- SC 118 / Hitchcock Parkway – CECS has been selected to be the consultant for the project. Scoping meeting will be scheduled shortly to prepare to negotiate for the project

(c) Augusta Public Transit

Mr. Johnson presented this item. Three Orion buses are in the process of being purchased. They should arrive by the end of this year. Two large vans and two ADA vehicles were also purchased and will be delivered in June. An RFP was sent out and five proposals were received for the privatization of the transit department. Of these five proposals two were non-compliant. Three vendors will be interviewed beginning today. Recommendation will go to the Augusta Commission by April 24th. An RFP also went out for bus shelter and bench advertisements. A pre-bid conference is scheduled for Friday with the bid opening on May 1st.

(d) Aiken County Transit

Mrs. Bassham presented this item. Things are going along well with the BFE and Dial a Ride services in urbanized Aiken County. Our Advisory Committee met on March 30 and support for the transit system is enthusiastic from local leaders, educational representatives, employment-related sector, medical service providers and service agency representatives. Unmet needs for dialysis patients, people with disabilities and senior who do not live along the route or in the Dial Ride service areas of the urbanized area were emphasized. Coordination between the Pony Express service and Best Friend Express services is being strengthened, as the two systems are now connecting at several points. We have requested a greatly needed, but small increase in funding from the County to help compensate for rising fuel costs. For many people, the Best Friend Express is a lifeline to the ability to work and live independently in our communities. We are expected to see increase ridership when the April numbers are reported in May due to the increasing price of gas.

The Transportation Association of SC (TASC), in partnership with SCDOT, will soon release a new seven minute video, which does an excellent job of pointing out the many benefits of public transit to local citizens, whether impacting our air quality, mitigating traffic congestion, getting commuters to work, people who can't or don't drive to necessary daily living destinations, or saving wear and tear on our roads. The professionally done video features local citizens from many walks of life discussing the positive impact of transportation, and prominently features the Best Friend Express and one of its passenger success stories. Our 'star passenger', Althea Smith has also been featured nationally by the American Public Transit Association (APTA) on its website and in Washington at a "Telling Our Story to Congress" event his past fall. She was also a speaker at the Awards Banquet at the TASC Annual Conference recently and really made an impact on the audience, which included both the new South Carolina Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Transportation and the Deputy Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration from Washington, and the Regional FTA Administrator from Atlanta!

At that Award Banquet held last month, William Hobbs, a long-time driver of the Best Friend Express, was recognized as urban system Driver of the Year in South Carolina, and LSCOG was given the

Directors' Award for Outstanding Contributions to Transit for our new one-call mobility and transit coordination center which opened in Augusta of 2010.

All three of our new bus shelters are up and awaiting the application of "wraps" to identify them as a part of the Best Friend Express system. New shelters at the Housing Authority, USC-Aiken and the Aiken Regional Medical Centers join already existing shelters at Aiken Technical College and in Burnetown. We are hoping to see additional shelters going up during the next year in other parts of the county served by the Best Friend express. Thanks to USC-A and the City of Aiken for donating the installation of the concrete pads and installation of the shelters, trash cans and bike racks and to all three locations for agreeing to maintain the shelters and trash receptacles.

6. Update on Special Studies Projects:

(a) ARTS Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Ms. Moultrie presented this item. We are currently in contract negotiations with Alta Greenways which was the top ranked consulting firm the Selection Committee recommended to update the Bike and Pedestrian Plan. If all goes well, the kickoff for the Bicycle and Pedestrian plan will be in May.

(b) Special Studies in Aiken County

I. US 1/ US 78 (Aiken Augusta Highway) Corridor Study

Mr. Jefferson presented this item. An Advisory Committee meeting was held two weeks ago on the US 1 / US 78 study. Turnout was good. Representatives from Aiken Tech, Aiken County and the City of Aiken and other organizations were in attendance. Some of the items discussed were potential catalyst sites.

A public information study on the Jefferson Davis highway corridor study was held the same day. Next week is the design charrette from Monday through Thursday at Aiken Technical College. The consults, Lawrence Group, will be conducting this meeting. The meeting starts around Noon on Monday and will wrap up on Thursday. A second Advisory Committee meeting will also be held on that Thursday. Notices have been sent out and are also posted on the website. Three catalyst sites have been identified. One is Warrentonville - Graniteville. The second is Aiken Technical College Langley Pond and the third is North Augusta Hamburg.

II. Travel Demand Model for the Aiken County Urbanized Area

The Travel Demand Model for Aiken County, City of Aiken and City of North Augusta - revised social economic data was submitted to the consultant Wilbur Smith and Associates. The recalibration is complete and results should be arriving shortly. This information will also help with the US 1 / US 78 corridor study.

7. Update on Air Quality Initiatives

(a) Aiken County

Mr. Jefferson presented this item. There is no new information since the last update.

(b) Richmond County

Ms. Moultrie presented this item. The CSRA Air Quality Alliance Stakeholders met at the SCE&G Misty Lake recreational facility on March 18th from 10:00 am - 12:30 pm. This was a very informative meeting. The power point presentations will be available the CSRA Air Quality Alliance website in a few days. The CSRA Air Quality Alliance website continues to be updated as needed.

8. Issues and Concerns

(a) Prior

Mr. Morton thanked GA DOT for changing the sign on the Wheeler Road on-ramp ramp to I-520 eastbound.

(b) New

Mr. Morton noted there is a marked difference in the resurfacing of Walton Way from Heard Avenue to Wheeler Road than on the other sections of Walton Way. From Heard Avenue to Wheeler Road the asphalt is so horrendous; it will tear up a car's alignment.

Mrs. Everett stated the resurfacing is not complete. Once complete, it will be as smooth as the other sections.

ADDENDUM

Mr. Morton moved and seconded the addition of the Addendum to the Agenda.

Mr. Johnson moved to approve the addition of the Addendum to the agenda. Mr. Bollinger seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

9. Consider recommending approval of the following project amendment to the FY 2011 - 2014 TIP and LRTP.

- (a) Bobby Jones Expressway / I-520 widening from SR 4 / US 1 Deans Bridge Road to SR 10 / Gordon Highway (PI# 210700) - Georgia DOT has requested construction and utilities be moved from FY 2012 to FY 2011. In addition, funding amounts have changed slightly for the Construction and Utility Phases (fund Code LI50).**

CAC – Mr. Morton moved and seconded the motion to recommend approval of this amendment to the TIP and LRTP. The motion was approved unanimously.

TCC – Mr. Johnson moved to recommend approval of this amendment to the TIP and LRTP. Mr. Wood seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. A. Patty".

George Patty, ARTS Project Director